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SUBJECT: WHA A/S SHANNON'S JULY 25 VISIT TO HAITI - OVERVIEW

Classified By: Ambassador Janet A. Sanderson for reason 1.4 (b/d).

1. (U) WHA A/S Thomas Shannon led the U.S. Delegation to the July 25 Haiti Donors' Conference, at which the USG pledged \$210 million for the coming 12 months -- the largest amount from any donor. During his one-day visit, A/S Shannon held bilaterals with President Preval, Prime Minister Alexis, MINUSTAH SRSG Mulet, Canadian CIDA President Greenhill, and Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Yamanaka. This message offers highlights of the visit. Septels provide detailed read-outs of the pledging conference and key bilateral meetings.

2. (U) Shannon's Message: Throughout his visit, Shannon emphasized that the USG is committed to the success of the democratically elected government in Haiti and to a continued role for MINUSTAH in stabilizing the country. He stressed that improved security is a pre-requisite for investment and development. He encouraged the GOH to enlist the support of other segments of society in a strategy to combat insecurity.

3. (C) President Preval: Preval offered assurances that he was dealing with the problem of insecurity, and floated the idea of holding a national conference on security, contraband, and corruption. He devoted most of his meeting with A/S Shannon to a request for USG assistance in road building and, to a lesser extent, counternarcotics. Preval appeared to have an overly optimistic assessment of prospects for passage of HOPE legislation. Shannon cautioned him to consider the political sensitivities of trade legislation in the U.S. Congress. Asked about Haiti's position on the GRULAC seat in the UNSC, Preval maintained that there is a CARICOM consensus to support Venezuela. Shannon indicated that we had a different understanding of CARICOM's position, which had laid out criteria for supporting a GRULAC candidate but had not identified a favored candidate. He reviewed the many reasons Guatemala is the stronger candidate and urged Preval to rethink his position.

4. (C) PM Alexis: Alexis said that the government is determined to manage the security situation, and would welcome additional specialized military capabilities for MINUSTAH. The Prime Minister also urged passage of HOPE legislation as part of a broader package of economic measures that would provide jobs to Haitian youth and dissuade them from joining gangs. Alexis raised GOH concerns over resumption of deportation of Haitian criminals who have completed their sentences in the U.S. He proposed that the USG and GOH work on a comprehensive program to provide for social reintegration of these criminals upon their return to Haiti.

5. (C) SRSG Mulet: Mulet discussed MINUSTAH's challenges operating in Haiti, which lacks a functional state -- especially outside Port-au-Prince. He warned that Aristide poses a growing threat as a potential spoiler, perhaps in collaboration with other forces that seek to destabilize the government. Preval, whom Mulet sees almost daily, is concerned about security but lacks a coherent vision for how to respond. Mulet urged renewal of MINUSTAH's mandate for a full year, in part to lock in commitments from wavering troop contributors. If MINUSTAH does not succeed in working with the GOH to stabilize Haiti, he said, then the international community will have to return again when the task will be even more difficult and expensive. Shannon assured Mulet of strong USG support for MINUSTAH.

6. (SBU) CIDA President Greenhill: Canadian International Development Agency President Robert Greenhill asserted that Haiti had the best opportunity in 20 years to make progress. He was pleased with the high-level presence at the donors' conference, despite competing international demands (e.g., the Middle East). Greenhill worried that expectations for rapid improvement in Haiti may be too high. The GOH has oversold to its citizens what can be accomplished in the short term. The country faces a difficult 12 - 18 months as it comes to grips with gangs, an inexperienced new parliament, and other challenges. As part of a long-term approach, CIDA has locked in a commitment of 100 million Canadian dollars (about USD 90 million) in aid to Haiti in each of the next five years. This will make Haiti Canada's second largest foreign aid recipient, after Afghanistan. The

Canadians favor renewal of MINUSTAH's mandate for a full year, and plan to continue their support to the UN Police. Greenhill and Shannon agreed that it is critical to improve the security environment in order for

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development aid to be effective and for investment to return to Haiti.

17. (SBU) Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Yamanaka: Vice Minister Akiko Yamanaka said that Japan believes Haiti is important not only in and of itself but also because of its potential effects (e.g., refugee and migrant flows) elsewhere in the region. Japan's assistance focuses on "human security" through technical cooperation in the fields of agriculture, environment, traffic systems, and police. Agreeing with Shannon on the key role of MINUSTAH, Yamanaka asked about prospects for renewing and strengthening MINUSTAH's mandate. In particular, she expressed concern that PRC irritation at Haiti's and Preval's relationship with Taiwan could limit PRC support for mandate renewal. Shannon underscored U.S. support for MINUSTAH, and noted that, while the PRC is irritated by GOH recognition of Taiwan, he hoped that the Chinese would not be so short-sighted as to use their UNSC vote to block renewal of MINUSTAH's mandate. Shannon said the U.S. would reach out to the PRC in advance of MINUSTAH's mandate renewal to manage their concerns.

18. (U) Press Conference: Prior to departing Port-au-Prince, Shannon gave a brief press conference. With its pledge at the July 25 Donors' Conference, the USG remains Haiti's largest donor. Moreover, in the period since the last Donors' Conference, USG disbursements were more than 50 percent higher than the amount originally pledged. He emphasized that, with an elected government now in place, this is the time to work with Haiti's democratic institutions to tackle common challenges, including security and economic development.

19. (C) Comment: This short visit underscored USG support for the democratically elected government and for MINUSTAH. The bilaterals with Preval and Alexis afforded an opportunity to push them to act more forcefully and publicly on security issues. Our contacts with the Canadians and Japanese showed general consensus that this is a moment of opportunity for Haiti, but one fraught with challenges that will require continued international support and engagement. Shannon's visit attracted positive press play, focused on the significant USG aid package for Haiti. End comment.

110. (U) A/S Shannon has cleared this message.
SANDERSON